



Chairman
Councillor
Gilligan

ANNUAL REPORT

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND

PERFORMANCE BOARD

APRIL 2007 – MARCH 2008

“ I would like to thank members of the Board for their hard work and the contribution they have made to its activities over the past year. This year key areas have included the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme which covers the impact of the Council’s energy use on the environment and the possibility of efficiency savings to reduce the cost of our energy bill which, if achieved, could lead to cost savings of £480,000 per annum. Job Evaluation and its implications on our staff was a concern and the Board, in making a number of recommendations, congratulated the Trade Unions and Management on their handling of the issues involved.

The Board received progress reports from the Neighbourhood Management Team, made suggestions relating to the timing and accessibility of its meetings, and will monitor progress twice yearly.”

Councillor Bob Gilligan
Chairman, Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2007/08 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), Lowe (Vice Chair), Bradshaw, Bryant, Dennett, Edge, C Inch, Loftus, Nolan, Norddahl, and Wainwright.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to resources, personnel, ICT and e-government, property, committee and member services, legal services, communications and marketing, Stadium, civic catering, procurement, equalities (employment aspects), corporate complaints procedure and area forums. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the reporting departments, namely Policy and Performance, Legal and Member Services and HR, Finance, Exchequer and Customer Services (revenues), Property Services and ICT.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year, and set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during that time.

Local Authority Carbon Management Programme

The Board considered a report outlining the process for taking forward the Council’s involvement in the Carbon Management Programme. It noted that the Council had applied for and was accepted onto the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. This programme would guide the Council through a number of processes which were set out in the full report for the Board.

The final step was the development of a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan by March 2008 to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. The project plan agreed by Executive Board set a target of reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 33% by 2012. This was an ambitious target and if it were to be achieved, it would likely require some financial investment over the five year period.

At its February meeting, the Board supported the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plans and referred them to Executive Board for approval. The action plan set out measures and sought to reduce the Council's emissions by 20% over the next five years and indicated a cost saving of £480,000 per annum, if achieved once all measures were implemented. The plan also established an aspirational 33% reduction by 2013/14 and indicated that cost savings in the region of £1.6M might be achieved if those targets were met.

Neighbourhood Management

The Board considered the progress to date in the development of neighbourhood management in the borough, current work and issues, and future objectives and challenges. The key ingredients to neighbourhood management were as follows:

- Use of evidence to tackle local issues.
- Multi level partnership working.
- Listening to local communities.
- Tailoring public services to meet local need.
- Making public money work harder.
- Acknowledging that one size does not fit all.

The Director of Neighbourhood Management outlined initiatives including engaging with strategic partners, building neighbourhood partnerships, and delivering early interventions.

Future plans were to track progress against the baseline, implement the partnership delivery plan, commission further interventions, agree neighbourhood action plans, and further support small local community groups.

Progress against those targets was considered at the February meeting, when it was anticipated that during the ensuing six months, neighbourhood management would be involved in the following issues:

- Actions around the external evaluation report.
- Devolving the intervention fund to neighbourhood management boards.
- Providing support for Board members, training etc.

Communications and Marketing

The Board looked at the current context for local government communication, including details of the LGA's reputation campaign. The division's response to the core actions recommended by the LGA included:

- Effective media management.
- Providing every household with an A-Z guide to Council Services.
- Publishing a quarterly Council magazine.
- Branding – effective and consistent linkages of Council brand to services.
- Good internal communications.
- Integration of the Council website.

The Board considered statistics from recent surveys revealing a high proportion of residents and staff who felt informed and/or well informed about standards of service. A draft Corporate communications and marketing strategy was considered, and members asked for an action plan for delivery to be brought forward.

Runcorn Town Hall Refurbishment

Members examined the progress of the Runcorn Town Hall refurbishment project, and called for a presentation which outlined the main objectives, the extent of the works, the factors affecting the design, the overall programme, and the budget and progress to date. The newly refurbished building would include a number of environmental/sustainability factors, such as roof insulation, Brise Soleil, lighting controls/energy saving lights, heating controls and photovoltaic. The results of these factors would be energy efficiency savings to the Council. The works were expected to be completed by June 2008, with the building being fully operational by July 2008.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

During the year the Board has focused a significant amount of effort on monitoring the performance of its reporting departments. Among the performance issues overseen by the Board during the year are:

- The implementation of job evaluation.
- The bringing together of Legal Services, Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- The continuation of consolidation of the Council's training provision.
- The review of the operation of Area Forums.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/09

The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2008/09) it will carry out full reviews examining the following areas:

- Access to Services.
- Transfer of Assets.
- Performance Monitoring (rolled over from previous year's performance management work, to be reported early in the Municipal year).
- Customer Complaints.

	<p>Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Committee Services in the first instance, telephone 0151 424 2061 extension 1121 or email Lynn.Caims@Halton.gov.uk</p>
--	--